

23
23 April 1964

No. 133

Sir,

I have the honour to communicate below the text of the note of today's date addressed to you by Dr. Raúl Roa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba:

"U Thant
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York.

"Sir,

"Once again, compelled by circumstances, I must address you on behalf of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba in order to inform you of a situation which could seriously affect peace and security in the Caribbean area, and this, given the nature of the factors involved, would inevitably lead to a crisis of profound and far-reaching international implications. As in October 1962, this situation is due to the arbitrary, provocative, illegal and irresponsible conduct of the Government of the United States of America.

"Actually, viewed strictly from the course of events, the current episode is essentially part of that same crisis, one which brought mankind to the verge of thermonuclear conflict and caused the United Nations and you in particular such serious concern that you offered your generous help to ease the tensions which were leading at an accelerated pace to the outbreak of a world war.

"When, at the beginning of 1963, the negotiations relating to the so-called Caribbean crisis formally ended at the United Nations, the Government of the United States of America, instead of accommodating itself to the spirit of those

U Thant,
Secretary-General of the United Nations,
New York.

/...

negotiations and striving to eliminate, with the means at its disposal, the combination of causes which were responsible for the atmosphere of imminent armed confrontation, continued its policy of multiform aggression against Cuba, adding further calumnies to the repertory of the 'cold war' and creating at the same time a climate of collective hysteria which would encourage and justify an armed attack on our country. In developing this crude, cynical and evil policy, the Government of the United States has unceasingly exerted pressure on Latin American Governments which have diplomatic relations with Cuba to break those relations and abandon their defence of the principles of non-intervention and self-determination, so dear to all peoples and especially to the peoples of our hemisphere, who have been chronic victims of the brutal claws of United States imperialism. It has promoted with its allies the discontinuance of normal trade relations with the Cuban market and has established discriminatory measures against free maritime traffic. It has continued its illegal flights over Cuban territory and its systematic violations of Cuba's territorial waters. It has increased the outrages, provocations and offences from Guantanamo Naval Base and has converted that usurped portion of Cuba's territory into a hiding-place of counter-revolutionaries, spies and terrorists. It has armed pirate vessels to attack our shores. It has trained saboteurs and has introduced arms and explosives into Cuba in order to subvert the socialist order, destroy the property of the people and commit murders.

"This behaviour on the part of the United States Government, which tramples under foot the Charter of the United Nations and violates international law, was renewed shortly after the negotiations in New York, in which, moved by your noble eagerness to save international peace and security, you played such an important part. Conceived by the Pentagon and the Department of State in utter recklessness, stripped of its democratic false-face, based on a long-range strategy aimed at crushing by force any movement for national liberation and independent economic development in Latin America, Africa and Asia, this perilous policy has been steadily acquiring a dangerous charge of aggressive potential, made up in equal measure of cupidity and adventurism. Cuba, as you cannot fail to see, is at the centre of this sinister plan of aggression, plunder and subjection to the economic, political and military interests of the Government of the United States of America.

/...

"A brief account of some of the attacks on Cuba carried out by agents of that Government last year and so far this year should suffice to provide a vivid picture of the situation we are citing.

"The month in which the negotiations had formally ended was scarcely over when two military aircraft of the F-101 type bearing the insignia of the United States Air Force opened machine-gun fire on Cayo Francés, a loading-point for sugar northeast of the port of Caibarién in Las Villas Province, at a time when approximately a hundred Cuban workers were there drilling for oil. This happened on 9 February 1963.

"On 13 February 1963 two vessels of the 'Sigma' type, belonging to the Cárdenas fishing co-operative, were attacked, stopped and seized by a gunboat coming from United States territory, and several Cuban seamen were wounded.

"On 1 March a note of protest was sent to the Government of the United States of America in connexion with the attack on the Cuban fishing-boat 'Joven Amalia' by the United States warship H.J. Ellison south of Oriente Province.

"On the night of 25 April 1963 a twin-engined aircraft coming from the United States flew at low altitude over the 'Ricc López' oil refinery in Havana, capital of the Republic, dropping a 100-pound bomb and various containers of incendiary material. The next day, telegraphic news agencies reported a statement made at a Press conference in Washington, D.C. by the United States citizen Alexander Rourke that he and another United States citizen had been aboard the attacking aircraft.

"On 17 March, at 11.45 p.m., one of the gunboats operating out of bases in the United States and Puerto Rico, fired on the Soviet vessel 'Lvov', which was moored at the 'Amézaga' pier, Isabela de Sagua, Las Villas Province, and was unloading merchandise from the Soviet Union.

"The pirate vessel fired several bursts from a 30-calibre machine-gun and a number of shots from a 20-millimetre cannon, hitting the ship's smokestack and one of its ventilators.

"In the early morning of 19 May a pirate boat, coming from the north, opened machine-gun fire in the direction of the mouth of the River Tarará, about fifteen kilometres east of Havana.

/...

"At 9.10 a.m. on 26 May an amphibious, twin-engined, turboprop aircraft of the United States Navy, type P-5 E, Serial No. 147-320, opened fire on Cayo Francés, north of Caibarién, Las Villas Province. After the attack, the aircraft continued for some time to circle over the locality at altitudes as low as 200 metres.

"In the early morning of 10 June a group of mercenaries sheltering in the United States, the crewmen of a pirate gunboat equipped with machine-guns and a 50-millimetre cannon, coming from United States territory, landed at Cayo Blanco, fifteen kilometres from Bahía de Cárdenas, Matanzas Province, and later made a surprise attack on four sailors who were patrolling the locality, killing Jesus Fernández Ramírez and seizing Daniel Expósito Torres and Calimerio Ramírez Jerez, and leaving behind a considerable quantity of arms of United States manufacture, explosives, food and various articles of the same origin. In their flight to United States territory the pirates seized the Cuban fishing-boat Elvira, forced its crew to take them to Cayo Maratón and landed there, taking with them the persons they had seized.

"On 13 August, at 1.30 a.m., two landing-craft, coming from a mother ship standing off the mouth of the Santa Lucía on the north coast of Pinar del Río Province, simultaneously entered two of the channels in that area, approached the sulphur-minerals plant situated there and opened fire on it in a surprise attack, using 50-calibre machine-guns and bazookas which perforated some oil tanks and sulphuric acid tanks, and piping containing acid. Members of the militia repelled the attack and the pirates fled under cover of large-calibre machine-gun fire from the mother ship.

"At 5.5 a.m. on 15 August a light pirate-aircraft fired several times on the 'Bolivia' sugar refinery in the municipality of Morón, Camagüey Province, and dropped two 50-pound bombs, one of which exploded.

"On 16 August a bomber aircraft flew over the port of Casilda, in Las Villas Province, firing several rockets at the oil tanks. The pirate-aircraft appeared over the town at approximately 2 a.m., first dropping a parachute with a yellow Bengal light. It had entered Cuban air space completely darkened and with engines throttled back. Members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces repelled the attack. One of the rockets hit and set fire to one of the twenty-four tank-cars there, which contained 8,124 gallons of crude petroleum. Another rocket struck near

/...

a tank containing 2 million gallons of crude petroleum, causing a small break which was immediately repaired. A third rocket hit the patio of the home of a seventy-six-year-old woman, Mrs. Carmen Iturralde, exploding and hurling fragments which embedded themselves in a refrigerator, the doors and the armchair in which the old lady usually sat, but by a miracle she was not killed.

"On the night of 4 September two unknown aircraft appeared over Las Villas Province but were driven off by anti-aircraft guns when they approached the airbase of that Province. At about 4 a.m. of the following day two twin-engined aircraft with similar features were repelled by artillery fire when they approached the airbase. As they fled, they dropped explosives, one of which fell in the city of Santa Clara and hit the house of Fabricio Aguilar Noriega, an instructor in the Revolutionary Armed Forces, who was instantly killed and three of whose four small children were wounded. A few moments later two targets flying at a high altitude and at greater speed than the others were sighted in the same area; they were doubtless jet aircraft and fled when pursued by interceptor aircraft of our Air Force.

"At approximately 4.30 p.m. on 5 September a pirate-aircraft coming from the north flew over the 'Brasil' sugar refinery, on the northern coast of Camagüey, dropping five 50-pound bombs which exploded in the vicinity of the refinery, damaging a nearby workers' billet.

"At the same time, between 9 and 10.30 p.m., the anti-aircraft artillery at Santiago de Cuba, in Oriente Province, opened fire twice against two targets which approached the refinery in that city.

"On the same day, 8 September, around midnight, anti-aircraft batteries in the town of Santa Clara, Las Villas Province, twice opened fire on targets in the air which were approaching the town.

"The confessions of numerous agents of the United States Government, captured by the Cuban authorities in flagrante delicto, are public knowledge. Giving names and details, types of vessels and aircraft, and training and embarkation points, they have revealed the plans of aggression and instructions they received from the lips of United States authorities for their attacks on Cuba. Equally well-known are the statements by the most responsible figures in the United States Government about their intention to continue violating the sovereignty of Cuba, in flagrant disregard of all international laws and for the Charter of the United Nations.

/...

"By 20 April 1964, U-2 aircraft of the Central Intelligence Agency had made 600 flights over Cuban territory. They had made fifty-three flights between 22 November and 31 December 1962. In 1963, they had flown 464 espionage missions. This year, as at 20 April, they had made eighty-two flights.

"Between 22 November 1962 and 19 April 1964, other types of aircraft violated our air space on forty-four occasions. In addition, United States air and naval units are continually engaged in espionage activities off our coasts and there are incursions almost every day by P2V Neptune aircraft north of the Provinces of Pinar del Río, Havana and Matanzas, and by ships of the 'AG-' type, such as AG-159 'Oxford', north of Havana Province.

"Also well-known are our Government's frequent denunciations of the harassing low-level flights of United States military aircraft over vessels of countries which trade with Cuba. Pirate vessels and United States naval and air units are carrying out intensive activity around our territory in missions condemned by international law.

"The Cuban people have bravely, prudently and calmly faced the outrages, abuses of force, bloody aggressions, material losses and crude provocations they have suffered at the hands of the United States Government. However, there is now no escaping it, the imperialists must be warned that, as the Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, Commander Fidel Castro, said in commemorating the third anniversary of the victory of Playa Girón - the first defeat of imperialism in America - 'there are limits to prudence and limits to calm; there are limits beyond which one must not go, and those limits are being dangerously abused'.

"The provocations, violations and outrages originating in the United States Guantanamo Naval Base, which amounted to 1,111 from October 1962 to 19 April 1964, have in the last few days become unusually frequent and arrogant, in forms indicative of a premeditated aggravation of international tensions. In the short space of six hours, on 18 and 19 April 1964, members of the garrison at the Base indulged in provocations whose insolence and coarseness are beyond all bounds. Because of their magnitude and significance, they are described below in detail for the information of the United Nations, of world opinion and for your own information:

"Saturday, 18 April: (1) At 6 p.m. the two Marine sentries at the gateway to the Base and their interpreter threw stones at Cuban soldiers who were hoisting the national flag, hitting one of them on the arm. In order to engage in this attack, the United States Marines crossed the dividing line and advanced about three metres into Cuban territory.

/...

"(2) At 6.30 p.m. a United States corporal and a private came up to the gateway drinking alcoholic beverages and offered some to the Marines on duty, who also drank. (3) At 6.50 p.m. two counter-revolutionaries sheltered at the Base drove up to the United States gateway in a car and offered alcoholic beverages to the Marines on duty, who accepted and drank them. (4) At 7.40 p.m. a woman counter-revolutionary sheltered at the Base drove up to the United States gateway in a car, remained in the United States sentry building for five minutes and later went off with the United States Marine interpreter into a nearby thicket, emerging a few minutes later. (5) At 8.40 p.m. two Cuban counter-revolutionaries sheltered at the Base brought alcoholic beverages to the Marines on duty at the gateway. (6) At 9.35 p.m. eight United States Marines crossed the dividing line and advanced into Cuban territory as far as the Cuban sentry building. While one of them urinated against the flagstaff of the national flag, the others tore up several shrubs, untied the rope on the flagstaff and left it dangling, and attacked the Cuban sentries, throwing stones at them, some of which hit our soldiers. Finally they returned to the Base, taking with them a garbage rake. (7) At 11 p.m. the eight United States Marines again crossed the dividing line, advanced as far as the sentry building and attacked the sentries, throwing stones at them. Using a Garand rifle and a pick-axe, the Marines tried to break in the door of the sentry structure but did not succeed because it was made of iron. They overturned a vat of paint which was beside the building. They then crossed over to the registration building and entered it. The sergeant in charge of the frontier detachment was forced to withdraw his men some twenty metres away from the building, removing the telephone in order to prevent it from being destroyed. Finally, the Marines returned to the Base.

"Sunday, 19 April: (8) At midnight, several United States Marines crossed the dividing line, advanced into Cuban territory as far as the sentry building and threw stones at our soldiers. When they returned to the Base, they took a hose-pipe from the bath in the Cuban sentry building. (9) At 12.35 a.m. a Marine crossed the dividing line, carrying a Garand rifle, which he cocked and pointed at the Cuban sentries. (10) The United States Marine interpreter, before withdrawing from the landside gateway, told our soldiers that what was being planned for Sunday 'will make you quake'.

/...

"The responsibility of the Government of the United States of America for the commission of these acts is utterly indisputable. Not only has it been entirely remiss in taking steps to prevent them in spite of the Cuban Government's formal complaints but, with unparalleled effrontery, it denies that they are taking place. It has even tried, with typical imperialist insolence, to blame its open and notorious misconduct, provocations and violations on our Government. As you know, the sentries on duty at the Cuban gateway of the Base and along the border have received clear and precise instructions to carry out their duties strictly, without yielding to the provocations which have been constantly testing the courage, self-control and discipline of our soldiers.

"May I remind you that during the Caribbean crisis it was the unchanging position of the Government of the United States of America to refuse to consider a long-term solution of the causes of that critical moment for international peace, causes which ultimately come down to its brutal threats of armed attack on Cuba even at the risk of unleashing a thermonuclear world war. The United States Government blocked all attempts to go to the root of the question, ignoring not only the voice of Cuba, which called for broad and thorough treatment of this grave problem, but also the clamour of world opinion for a solution which would offer permanent assurances for all the parties in the conflict.

"As the facts have more than amply demonstrated, the Government of the United States of America has at no time - neither during nor after the crisis - abandoned its aggressive purposes, its positions of strength, its imperialist arrogance or its contumacious mockery of the United Nations Charter, and today, with even more sinister designs, it is trying to manufacture a new crisis of world proportions, and for that purpose it is deliberately stepping up its provocations at the Guantanamo Naval Base and exerting pressure on the Organization of American States to act as the executing agency of the plan of military aggression it has hatched against Cuba.

"On 7 January 1963, in the note that Ambassador Carlos M. Lechuga, Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, was instructed to deliver to you when the negotiations undertaken to solve the international crisis provoked by the United States Government had ended, our Government predicted that those negotiations were far from having led to 'an effective agreement capable of guaranteeing permanent peace in the Caribbean and eliminating the existing tensions'.

/...

"Today, as yesterday, there can be no effective agreement unless it includes consideration of the five points which were called for as minimum guarantees by Commander Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, in his statement of 28 October 1962, and are based on the fundamental principles of international law. The subsequent events herein described and the present conduct of the Government of the United States of America clearly corroborate this.

"Before, during and since the Caribbean crisis, the Government of Cuba has reiterated its policy of peace and its willingness to discuss differences on the basis of sovereign equality. It considers that there is no other way to arrive at wholly satisfactory solutions that would eliminate the dangerous frictions which are once again being provoked with unheard of insolence and irresponsibility for purposes that risk incalculable consequences to all States and peoples without exception, and it considers it the duty of the United Nations, in the light of its Purposes and Principles, its raison d'être, to concern itself, as you personally did on the earlier occasion, with this grave situation.

"Cuba, as its Government has repeatedly declared, genuinely desires peace. As Commander Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, said on the above-mentioned occasion, 'We do not want war, we want peace, we want it sincerely. War means the loss of lives, the loss of men, it means great suffering; war means great destruction. We love what we are making: our Revolution. We love what we are creating: the fruit of our labours, which we want some day to be the fruit of our people; we want some day to see graduating from the universities those tens of thousands of young people who today are studying in schools and in centres of pre-university and technical training; we want some day to see the realization of all our dreams. We want our people one day to harvest the fruit of our labours. This is what we love so greatly, this is what we dream of, and we say so from our hearts. This is what men have fought and died for, what revolutions were made for.'

"It must be warned, however, that to interpret this sincere desire for peace of the Cuban Government and people as a sign of weakness or fear would lead to false and dangerous conclusions. No one can have any doubts on that score after the continual demonstrations which the Cuban people, in the face of implacable and powerful enemies, have given of their courage, determination and dignity in defence

/...

of their Revolution and their inalienable right to choose socialism as a path of national development. In any case, such a warning is in order because the latest United States provocations may be aimed at creating confusion and illusions.

"To be willing peacefully to negotiate our differences is by no means the same as accepting impositions, threats, provocations and violations from the Government of the United States of America. The people and the Government of Cuba sincerely want peace, but they have never sought it and never will seek it at the cost of blemishing the dignity, honour and pride of our country.

"You will doubtless be aware that the Government of the United States of America persistently rejected the proper formula - the only one compatible with our sovereignty - of multiple inspection, when the United States delegates called for inspection on the soil of Cuba in the months of October and November 1962. The Government of the United States of America, at all times, has sought to legalize flights over Cuba, has endeavoured to humiliate us and, in the face of the Revolutionary Government's flat refusal to accept this violation of our independence and endorse such a flagrant infraction of international legal principles, has continued to carry out by force its activities of espionage, provocation and subversion.

"Neither then nor now, in spite of the shaky ground on which they stand, have the imperialists seemed to understand the language of mutual concessions and reciprocal guarantees. On the contrary, they crudely and arrogantly demand absolute submission and unconditional surrender. Today as before, the United States Government officially proclaims its illegal, defiant and irresponsible decision to inspect the territory of a Member State of the United Nations. As you will understand, such conduct, which strikes at the United Nations Charter and entails serious dangers for international peace and security, is completely intolerable. Let it be clearly recorded that the Revolutionary Government of Cuba does not recognize any right of the Government of the United States of America to violate its sovereignty and that it will accordingly take, in self-defence, whatever measures it deems appropriate.

/...

"The Revolutionary Government of Cuba wishes to report to the United Nations, through you, Sir, that preparations of the Government of the United States of America for military aggression against our country are being speeded up. It furthermore warns that the Cuban people is not prepared to tolerate indefinitely the provocations of the Marines stationed at the Guantanamo Naval Base, or to stand by idly while our air space is violated.

"Commander Fidel Castro, the Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, has clearly defined Cuba's position with these words:

"'Although we love the Revolution and want some day to see our dreams become realities, if the price we must pay for that are such provocations, if the price we must pay is to go down on our knees, to sacrifice our dignity, and our pride, and our honour and our life as a worthy people - if peace is to be that miserable peace, then we do not want such a peace!

"'No theory, no doctrine, no revolutionary principle compels us to tolerate this - no theory and no principle. We are revolutionaries, but being a revolutionary means being ready to pay the price necessary to be a revolutionary. Wanting a better world means being ready to pay the price necessary. And rather than that miserable peace, it is a hundred times better to have the dignified peace of the grave - the dignified peace of those who fell at Girón!

"'And I say this so that the imperialists may know - so that the world may know - that we are not prepared to tolerate certain things which go beyond the limits of what is acceptable and tolerable. We would rather disappear as a Revolution, as a people and even geographically, as an island.

"'And it is well that the imperialists should know this, should know what they may expect. If what they want is to provoke a war, provoke a problem, they will get it, but it will be more than they bargained for! And if what they want is to erase this island from the map, then let them prepare themselves to do so, for we would sooner see ourselves erased than bow our head - the proud head of this nation, the dignified heroic head of this nation!

"'If the imperialists think that by bare-faced blackmail, by demonstrating their might, they are going to intimidate us, we must tell them that all might has its limit, and that limit lies where there is no fear, where fear ends. That is the limit of any might!'

/...

"The outrageous provocations committed on 19 April by groups of Marines from Guantanamo Naval Base and the cynical statement by the United States Government about continuing espionage flights over Cuba, on the one hand, and on the other hand the expressed determination of the Revolutionary Government and people of Cuba not to tolerate either the one or the other, must have given you more than ample grounds for very serious thought. The announced concentration of hundreds of United States jet aircraft at bases in Florida and on aircraft-carriers sailing near Cuba - aircraft which only appear to be waiting for orders to bomb Cuban objectives with high explosives - make the situation even more dramatic. It is these recent developments that have prompted the Cuban Government to send you this note.

"It is obvious that the crude alternative laid down by the Government of the United States of America contains elements similar to those which gave rise to the Caribbean crisis. The Revolutionary Government and people of Cuba feel certain that in the discharge of your duty as Secretary-General of the United Nations and in keeping with the concern you showed in October 1962, you will take the action which your wisdom and experience dictate in view of the growing seriousness of the developments described.

"The Revolutionary Government of Cuba has discharged its duty in bringing this matter to your attention in good time, and through the United Nations, to the attention of the whole world.

"I should be most grateful if you would have this note circulated to the representatives of Member States.

"Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Rául Roa
Minister for Foreign Affairs"

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Juan Juarbe y Juarbe
Counsellor
Acting head of the Mission

(Stamp of the Permanent Mission
of Cuba to the United Nations)